



Weaving Tradition into Practical Innovation: Design Research on Chinese Knotting Craft

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Abstract: Chinese knotting is a traditional craft with a rich history that has been passed down through generations. It showcases intricate weaving techniques and diverse patterns, reflecting the spiritual and cultural essence of China. This article focuses on the development and innovative characteristics of knot-weaving art, conducting research and analysis as a basis for creative practice. The aim is to explore and experiment with design approaches that are more adaptable and personalized for traditional knot-weaving art, achieving an effective integration of artistry and functionality. The work, themed “The Water-colored Sky,” embodies the vision of returning to nature and embracing purity and beauty, infusing fresh vitality into the contemporary field of fiber arts.

Keywords: Chinese knotting art; innovative design; fiber arts

1. Introduction

Chinese knotting art is a traditional handicraft with a long history, passed down from ancient China to the present. It features unique weaving techniques and a diverse range of patterns. This art form embodies the distinct spiritual values and cultural consciousness of the Chinese nation. Over thousands of years, it has been continuously inherited and developed, gaining widespread appreciation worldwide.

The history of Chinese knotting dates back to ancient times. It flourished during the Tang and Song dynasties and reached its peak in the Ming and Qing dynasties. In antiquity, knots were used as a means of recording historical and cultural events, even before the emergence of written language. Over time, knots transformed into delicate and elegant handicrafts. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the fusion of court craftsmanship and folk artistry contributed to remarkable advancements in this craft. This artistic tradition has endured through the ages and continues to thrive today.

After years of evolution, knotting has become a refined art form through which people convey good luck, express best wishes, and embody spiritual significance. Different knots carry specific meanings. For example, the auspicious knot symbolizes good fortune, peace, and well-being, while the Pan Chang knot represents family prosperity and eternal continuity. With its unique charm and rich variety, Chinese knotting showcases the wisdom and culture of the Chinese people and enjoys widespread popularity.

2. Innovative Characteristics of Knot Weaving Art

2.1 Innovation in Design Concepts

Traditional Chinese fibers possess unique cultural characteristics that effectively convey the artistic messages intended by the creators. While modern fiber art draws inspiration from new cultural influences, it does not abandon tradition; rather, it refines and innovates upon it. This process involves selecting and preserving the essence of traditional techniques while discarding outdated elements, continuously revitalizing the culture.

Specifically, this approach extracts distinctive features of Chinese tradition and transforms them by integrating them with contemporary art. This fusion deepens the expression of certain traditional Chinese cultural concepts and enhances the emotional impact of the artwork. By employing rich imagination, materials can be abstracted, restructured, and reorganized to create striking visual effects that communicate individuality and fresh design concepts[1].

2.2 Diversity in Techniques and Expressions

In the captivating world of graphics and patterns, the continuous repetition, gradual variation, and diverse techniques generate a powerful visual impact that captivates the viewer. This form of abstraction breathes life into fiber art, inviting people to experience beauty in its most authentic expression. Modern fiber art is intrinsically linked to its materials, display forms, color dynamics, and decorative styles, making it a rich medium for creativity. Moreover, the inherent structural qualities of fibers can be expertly manipulated to create striking visual contrasts—such as divergence versus convergence, chaos

versus order, and curves versus straight lines—drawing the viewer into a profound visual dialogue.

3. Design examples of Contemporary Innovations in Chinese Knotting Art

The art of knot weaving, characterized by its diverse materials and expressive creative language, serves as a powerful medium for conveying artists' thoughts and spiritual essence. This paper consolidates relevant research and analyzes works in this field, providing valuable insights for future design and creative practices[2].

Chinese designer Jiang Yunge has focused his attention on the cosmos, with his work *Mirror* being one of his most representative pieces. Through artistic techniques, he creates vivid and colorful reflections of landscapes, blending elements of nature with the vastness of space. In contrast, Zhao Xiaoqing captures scenic photographs during her travels. By combining weaving techniques with abstract thinking, she has developed the *Weaving in Space* series. This collection explores the uniqueness of individuality in modern life while simultaneously challenging the conventional perception of the “wall” as a mere surface, pushing its boundaries to serve as a dynamic space for artistic expression.

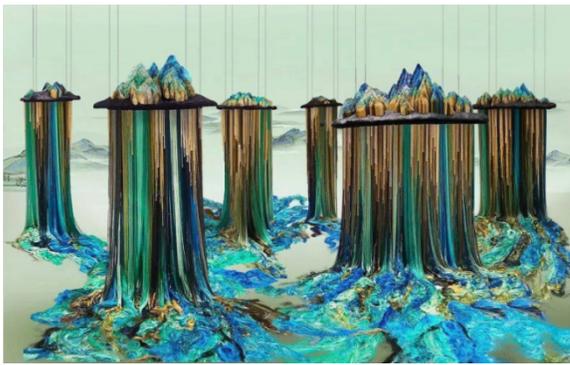


Figure 1. Jiang Yunge “Mirror”



Figure 2. Zhao Xiaoqing “Weaving in Space”

Furthermore, jewelry designer Ma Hailing is committed to merging traditional Chinese knotting artistry with contemporary design, seamlessly integrating both Eastern and Western cultural elements to infuse her creations with rich cultural poetry and imagery. Teacher Zhou Yufei transforms the ropes in her hands, making them “bloom” into flowers and “grow” into intricate shapes, turning them into knot art that emanates warmth. Zhang Guoqing, a representative inheritor of Chengdu’s intangible cultural heritage in rope weaving techniques, has cultivated a distinctive artistic style through ongoing innovation while honoring tradition[3].



Figure 3. Ma Hailing’s Knot Art

4. Practical Innovation in Knot Weaving Craft

4.1 Design Concept

This piece is a fiber wall hanging design centered around the theme “The Water-Colored Sky.” Using natural fibers such as cotton rope and wool strips, the artwork incorporates a large-scale coiling technique combined with mixed media. The final piece is intended for interior decoration, creating a unique atmosphere that highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of a living space.

Embodying the essence of “Sky,” this piece resonates with nature’s splendor and captures the spirit of the ancient say-

ing, “Skylight and water color, all is peaceful at a glance.” The predominantly blue hues evoke a serene harmony, reflecting humanity’s yearning for balance and inner peace. In our fast-paced lives, the seamless integration of sky and water in this artwork serves as a gentle reminder to embrace the simplicity and authenticity of nature. Allow this piece to inspire you and to evoke a sense of calm, inviting a deeper connection to both your surroundings and your own spirit.

4.2 Design Patterns

The design of this work is inspired by the flowing forms of water found in nature, featuring two gentle, wavy lines as its central elements. The delicate addition of leaves enhances the organic and natural essence of the piece. The predominant use of a blue gradient evokes feelings of trust, stability, and a deep connection to both the sky and the ocean. Blue symbolizes vastness and serenity, which is reflected in the subtle transition of hues, creating a soothing and expansive effect. This gradient not only adds depth and dimension to the composition but also transforms it into a dynamic, multi-layered visual experience. The seamless interplay of shades evokes tranquility, reminiscent of gazing upon a vast, endless sky, fostering a sense of harmony and peace within the viewer[4].

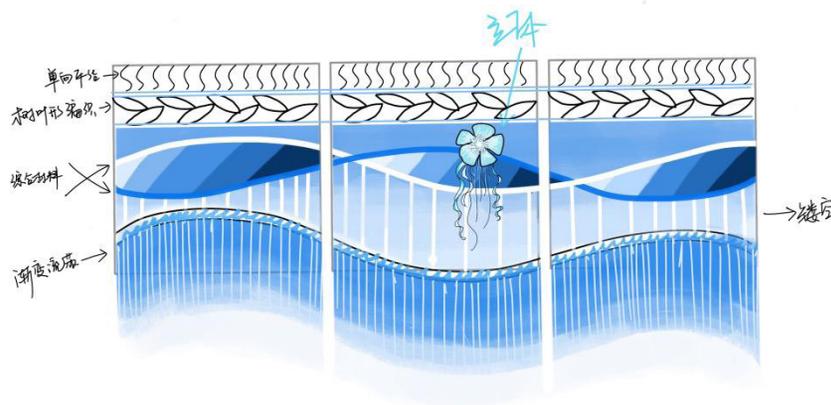


Figure 4. Pattern design

4.3 Creative Process

When creating the artwork, a slanted coil knotting technique is used at the top to weave the shape of the leaves. One thread acts as the axis while another thread is wrapped around it to form the knot, allowing for continuous weaving. By changing the axis, the direction of the pattern can be altered. Additionally, the position of the coils can be adjusted to modify the shape of the design. In the middle section, while weaving the main pattern, techniques such as extra wrapping and hollowing are employed to enhance the overall weaving effect.



Figure 5. Creative Process

Wool, Icelandic cotton yarn, and cotton ropes are blended together to enhance the texture of the surface. The natural curliness of the wool and Icelandic cotton creates a warm, soft feel that symbolizes the clouds drifting in the sky. This combination allows the wall hanging to take on a three-dimensional woven form that seamlessly integrates with the surrounding

environment. It establishes a complementary relationship between shape and space, offering a unique visual experience.

At the bottom, tassel weaving is employed to create a “blurred” visual effect. Dyed cotton ropes with gradient colors hang downward, showcasing the richness of the materials and their rhythmic variations[5]. The final result consists of three pieces that, when placed together, form a flowing wave shape, representing the rippling surface of water and the vast scenery where water meets the sky.



Figure 6. Creative Process

4.4 Final Showcase

4.4.1 Artwork Display



Figure 7. Creative Process

4.4.2 Scene Effect Display

After completion, the work will be displayed as a wall hanging, contributing to the interior decor and significantly transforming the space. The simple, nature-inspired fiber wall hanging carries a deep emotional resonance, enhancing the overall harmony of the environment. This creates a unique atmosphere and a poetic living space.



Figure 8. Scene Effect Display

5. Conclusions

This article focuses on fiber art, using nature and the sky as its main subjects. It explores innovative practices within fiber art and examines its contemporary significance in terms of spatial aesthetics, the preservation of traditional culture, and the transformation of natural themes through fiber techniques.

The representation of landscapes through knotting and weaving is a spiritual expression of nature and culture. It reflects a strong connection to traditional culture, highlighting the beauty of both artistry and heritage. The themes, forms, and meanings of the artwork are essential elements that enhance its artistic impact and are central to our examination. The author's understanding and practice of fiber art have provided valuable insights throughout the creative process. The innovation of natural themes in fiber art represents not only a breakthrough in content expression but, due to the unique characteristics of our era, also sparks a chain reaction involving concepts, materials, colors, techniques, and methods of expression. Ultimately, this emphasis underscores the deeper cultural significance behind the work, enhances the emotional impact of the art in spatial presentations, boosts visual aesthetics, and fosters a natural cultural atmosphere.

As we navigate a new wave of advancements in science and evolving artistic ideologies, the future of knotting and weaving art appears vibrant in both the market and public interest. However, it is vital to adhere to the principles of artistic innovation. Grounded in traditional culture and contemporary aesthetic thought, we should aim to enrich its expressive content continuously, innovate artistic forms, encourage participation from multidisciplinary groups, and explore new avenues for the development of fiber art. This approach will better reflect the relationship between humans, nature, and the environment, ultimately elevating people's aesthetic awareness.

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